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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 11//07

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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, Oct. 31

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 1, 2007

10:40

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Futahashi at Kantei.

12:22

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Met with Futahashi.

13:56

Met with Vice Health and Labor Minister Erikawa and Social Insurance Agency Director-General Sakano.

15:00

Met with Vice Foreign Minister Yachi. Afterwards, met with LDP Osaka Chapter Chair Taro Nakayama.

16:03

Met with Minister of State for Economic and Fiscal Policy Ota and others. Later, met with Vice Environment Minister Tamura and Global Environment Bureau Director-General Minamikawa.

17:08

Met with Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs Shinohara. Afterwards, met with Okinawa Gov. Nakaima.

19:04

Dined with his secretaries at "Les Saisons" at Imperial Hotel.

21:48

Arrived at his private residence in Nozawa.

4) Prime Minister Fukuda to leave for US to meet President Bush on Nov. 16 with armful of pending issues

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 1, 2007

The first meeting between Prime Minister Fukuda and United States President Bush is likely to take place in Washington on Nov. 16. There are no prospects in sight for an early passage of a new bill designed to resume the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. It is also speculated that the US might delist North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism in November. The two leaders will hold their meeting at such a sensitive time. Additionally, there are issues that have been smoldering between the two countries as the potential causes for bilateral friction, such as the pending US force realignment in Japan and possible cuts in Japan's host nation support. The prime minister will set out for the US with a heavy load on his shoulders.

The prime minister is scheduled to leave for the US on Nov. 15 and meet with President Bush over lunch at the White House the following day. He is expected to explain the outlook for the fate of the new refueling legislation, hoping to obtain the understanding of the President.

There are numerous pending issues between Japan and the US. Former Vice Defense Minister played a key role in dealing with the issue of US force realignment. Moriya, however, has since left the ministry, and a series of scandals involving him, including his cozy ties with a defense contractor, has been cropping up, increasing the confusion.

Fukuda met Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima for the first time at his official residence (Kantei) yesterday, in which he said in response to a request by Nakaima for special consideration to the base issue: "I would like to make utmost efforts in that direction."

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The government will resume talks on the Futenma relocation issue with local communities on Nov. 7, but dramatic progress cannot be expected under the current situation.

On host nation support, the Finance Ministry has announced plans to cut the so-called sympathy budget by 10 billion yen when the current special agreement is renewed at the end of March 2008. But US Secretary of Defense Gates is expected to call on Japan to reduce

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the US burden when he visits Japan on the 7th. A conclusion is unlikely to be reached before the compilation later the year of the budget bill for next fiscal year.

Beef remains as another thorny issue. The US is calling on Japan to abolish its import conditions. Japan has set the condition of importing only beef from cattle 20 months of age or younger, but the US has claimed that Japan should abide by the international standard. The government fears that if Japan makes a compromise on food safety, consumers might react strongly.

Above all, issues with North Korea are lying as the main pending problem. The prime minister met Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi yesterday and listened to his briefing about the positions of the US government and Congress toward North Korea, based on the contents of talks he had held with US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill during his recent visit to the US. The prime minister has emphasized a policy of dialogue toward Pyongyang, but should Washington delist the North at an early date, his policy switch might elicit an angry response from hard-liners toward North Korea.

In the Diet, the opposition camp has control of the House of Councillors. Under this situation, Prime Minister Fukuda fears that if foreign countries judge Fukuda as lacking the competence required of a prime minister, he will lose international confidence. The first Japan-US summit will be a major challenge for the prime minister.

5) Six-year MSDF refueling mission to be halted

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 1, 2007

The Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) is to halt today its six-year refueling operation in support of the antiterrorism campaign in and around Afghanistan, which was Japan's international contribution, like its activities to support Iraqi reconstruction. With the halt of the MSDF refueling mission, Japan's fight against the war on terror will reach a major turning point.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura expressed regret of the withdrawal of the MSDF in a press conference yesterday, saying: "Japan alone will drop out of the ongoing war on terror. This will leave a serious stain on Japan's future." Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura also expressed his concern, noting, "The MSDF's activities are a significant basis for the maritime interdiction operation (MIO). The efficiency of the MIO will greatly drop."

Following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi ordered the creation of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. The law was established to

extend logistic support to foreign vessels engaging in the campaign to eliminate terrorist forces. Based on the law, Japan for the first

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time dispatched the Self-Defense Forces overseas in a time of war.

The MSDF in December 2001 began supplying fuel in the Indian Ocean. One year later, in the face of strong resistance, the government dispatched an Aegis destroyer, having the SDF carry out overseas operations for a long time. In the first two year of its operations in the Indian Ocean, the MSDF supplied 90 PERCENT of its fuel to US ships, but it supplied more oil to French and Pakistani vessels after 2003, when the Iraq war started. The MSDF provided fuel to warships from as many as 11 countries.

Among the countries taking part in the MIO, Japan is the only country that supplied fuel free of charge. Ambassadors to Japan from 11 countries, including the US, Britain, and Afghanistan, yesterday held briefing to explain the importance of the MSDF operations to lawmakers of ruling and opposition parties.

However, the fate of a new bill to continue the MSDF mission is uncertain at present. The opposition camp has strongly criticized the alleged diversion of fuel provided by the MSDF to a US supply ship in February 2003 for use in the Iraq war, as well as the government's correction of the cover-up of a data error the amount of fuel supplied to a US ship. A senior Defense Ministry official said dejectedly: "If deliberations on the new bill slip to next year's ordinary session, the MSDF refueling mission might be suspended for one year."

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda told the press last night: "I'm disappointed with the halt of the MSDF mission. I hope that the operation will be resumed as early as possible." The government is going to release a statement that says it aims to restart the activities as quickly as possible.

6) Pentagon concerned about MSDF pullout, impact on operations

SANKEI (Page 7) (Abridged)
November 1, 2007

WASHINGTON-Japan will shortly call off the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling activities in the Indian Ocean. In this regard, the US Department of Defense is concerned about potential repercussions on the war on terror, an official said on Oct. 30. This Pentagon official also indicated that the United States does not want to see its bilateral alliance with Japan worsen as a consequence of the MSDF's withdrawal. However, the Pentagon official implied the US government's dissatisfaction, since the MSDF is not expected to resume its refueling activities. The official was speaking to Japanese reporters, with Secretary of Defense Gates scheduled to visit Japan in early November.

The Pentagon official noted that naval vessels from countries like Pakistan and Italy would have to make more port calls for fuel after the MSDF's withdrawal and would lose time for patrolling. Furthermore, the Pentagon official also said those vessels would be exposed to terrorist attacks or other eventualities should they make more port calls. This official likened such a case to the incident in October 2000, in which a small boat attacked the USS Cole, a US Navy destroyer, when she was anchored for fuel in the port of Aden, Yemen, and many were killed or wounded.

7) Japan-US relations may be strained with antiterrorism law due to expire today

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TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 7) (Full)
November 1, 2007

Yasuyuki Oguri, Washington

With the expiration today of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, Japan will suspend the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The US government takes this suspension as a matter Japan should handle and as an unavoidable case. However, the curtailment could rapidly strain Japan-US relations, and could affect the US decision on whether North Korea will be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

At a time when the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) suffered a devastating defeat in the Upper House election, the US government half-judged that it had become difficult for Japan to continue the refueling operation. While Washington is unhappy with the suspension, there is no mood to criticize Japan.

Lying behind Washington's calm attitude is its judgment that although it expects Tokyo to resume the refueling mission as quickly as possible, if it puts strong pressure on Japan to do so, the result would simply create a strong impression that the US was forcing Japan to engage in the refueling mission and that could have an adverse effect on Diet deliberations on new antiterrorism special measures legislation. Out of consideration for Japan, Secretary of Defense Gates, who will visit Japan in early November, will not actively take up this matter.

Speaking of this attitude of the US government, Bruce Klinger, a senior research fellow for Northeast Asia at the Heritage Foundation, said, "I think the US government, which is considering delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, does not reproach Japan regarding the refueling issue." He indicated that the US could not be hard on Japan over the refueling issue since the US envisions a possible delisting of North Korea, which Japan is opposing.

In other words, it has become easy for the US now to delist North Korea because Japan has had to suspend the refueling mission. But if North Korea is delisted, Japan will be certain to raise an objection.

In addition to these issues, Japan and the US have other issues that could trigger friction such as a cut in Japan's host-nation support.

Should the refueling issue spark trouble over other issues, such as the delisting of North Korea and the reduction host-nation support, there is a good possibility that the currently solid Japan-US ties could worsen rapidly.

8) MSDF-refueled US vessel may have returned straight home; Defense Ministry asking US for verification

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
November 1, 2007

Defense Ministry Operations Planning Bureau Director-General Nobushige Takamizawa revealed in yesterday's meeting of the House of Representatives Special Committee on Prevention of Terrorism that

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there is a possibility that a US vessel refueled by the Maritime Self-Defense Force in the Indian Ocean did not take action in line with the objectives of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law and that the ministry has asked the US side for its confirmation.

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) lawmaker Yoriyoshi Matsuno, based on the US cruiser Antietam's website, pointed out the possibility that the US vessel refueled by the MSDF in waters off Mumbai, India, on December 18, 2001, returned straight to the United States via Singapore. Matsuno then asked, "Did it operate in line with the spirit of the Antiterrorism Law?"

9) Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura: No problem with MSDF supplying fuel to ship with more than one mission

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
November 1, 2007

In a Lower House Antiterrorism Committee session yesterday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura took the view that there is no problem with the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) in the Indian Ocean providing fuel to a vessel engaged in more than one mission. The US Defense Department said in a statement released recently: "It is difficult to trace how the fuel Japan supplied was used, because US Navy vessels often engage in more than one mission."

In response to a question by Seiken Akamine of the Japanese Communist Party, Machimura stated:

"What is important is that a ship that Japan provides oil is engaged in the maritime interdiction operation. As long as that qualification is satisfied, there is no problem with whether a ship is engaged in another mission."

Akamine questioned, "Don't you think that you means that the MSDF can supply oil to even a warship that is carrying out a large air-raid in the Iraq war?" Machimura answered: "I think (I) understand the law correctly."

10) Ex-MSDF official to be called as unsworn witness

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
November 1, 2007

The House of Representatives Special Committee on Antiterror Measures held a meeting of its directors yesterday on the Defense Ministry's cover-up of an error in the quantity of fuel supplied by the Maritime Self-Defense Force to a US Navy oiler. In the meeting, the committee directors agreed to summon Masayoshi Teraoka, a former director of the Plans and Programs Division at the MSDF Maritime Staff Office, to the committee on the morning of Nov. 5 as an unsworn witness as demanded by the opposition parties. The committee will also call in four academic experts on the afternoon of the same day to hear their views. They include Kazuhisa Ogawa, a military analyst, and Kenji Isezaki, a professor at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

11) Yamada Yoko found to have given former Defense Minister Kyuma more than 100,000 yen from slush funds as transportation expenses in 2005

MAINICHI (Page 30) (Full)

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It was found that Yamada Yoko, a trading company specializing in defense procurement, which had treated former Administrative Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya (63) with free rounds of golf, had approximately 2 million yen as slush funds and gave portions of the funds to politicians as transportation expenses. According to an involved source, the company gave more than 100,000 yen to then Defense Minister Akio Kyuma of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in 2005 as transportation expenses. The Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office knows these facts and is pressing ahead with efforts to shed light on Yamada Yoko's payoffs to politicians and bureaucrats.

The same source also said that Kyuma received more than 100,000 yen as transportation expenses when he attended a wedding reception for a family member of the owner of Yamada Yoko at the end of 2005. Yamada Yoko has accumulated slush funds worth about 2 million yen a year by cashing gift certificates purchased by its affiliate. The cash given to Kyuma was disbursed from these funds.

Kyuma was on close terms with the family of the owner of Yamada Yoko. He knew Motonobu Miyazaki (69), former executive director of the company, who has repeatedly entertained Moriya, from about 10 years ago. It has also been found that Kyuma had been invited for free meals by Miyazaki since last fall.

Miyazaki is reportedly telling investigators about Yamada Yoko's slush funds on a voluntary basis. Investigators appear to be making efforts to get to the bottom of the matter.

12) Attendance of Nihon Mirise employee at Defense Ministry meeting reported to Moriya in March; Moriya suspected of having made false testimony in Diet

NIKKEI (Page 43) (Full)
November 1, 2007

It was learned from a related source yesterday that an employee of Nihon Mirise, a company established by Motonobu Yamada (69), a former executive director of Yamada Yoko, was present at a meeting on the procurement of engines for the next-generation transport aircraft, codenamed CX, held in January at the ministry, causing a problem within the ministry, since Nihon Mirise was not a contractor. The matter was reported to then Administrative Vice Defense Minister Takemasa Moriya (63) in March. Regarding this issue, Moriya noted in his sworn testimony in the Diet, "I am not aware of that matter." There is a possibility of Moriya being charged with making false testimony.

According to the same source, the objective of the meeting was to discuss the procurement of the CX engine. Representatives of Kawasaki Heavy Industries, the CX manufacturer, General Electric (GE) of the US, the engine manufacturer, and Yamada Yoko, GE's Japan agent, took part in it. The employee of Nihon Mirise was allegedly present at this meeting.

Nihon Mirise replaced Yamada Yoko in late July as GE's Japan agent. However, since it had not yet signed an agent contract with GE as of January, the company was not a contracting company for the CX engine.

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As such, a question arose in the Defense Ministry, and the ministry approved his attendance as an interpreter for the GE representative.

Nihon Mirise and Yamada Yoko were fighting in a civil suit over defense trade rights, such as an agent contract for GE, and the headhunting of Yamada Yoko employees by Nihon Mirise.

Since there was fear that the attendance of a representative of Nihon Mirise, an outsider, at an important in-house meeting could draw fire outside the ministry, details of the matter were allegedly reported to top officials at the time, including then Defense Minister Akio Kyuma and Moriya.

Taking up this matter during the Diet summoning of Moriya as a sworn witness, New Komeito lawmaker Shigeyuki Tomita questioned him, "Yamada Yoko was GE's agent at the time, and yet a representative of Nihon Mirise also took part in the meeting. Don't you think it is strange that an irrelevant person was present at the meeting, unless a very influential person approved his attendance?"

Moriya replied, "I am not aware of that fact." His reply is inconsistent with the allegation given by the related source, who said that the matter was reported to Moriya in March.

The Diet Testimony Law stipulates that if a sworn witness makes false testimony in Diet summoning, this person could be given a prison sentence up to 10 years.

13) Fukuda, Nakaima reach agreement on early relocation of Futenma Air Station

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
November 1, 2007

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda held talks yesterday with Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima for the first time after assuming office

and reached an agreement to aim at the early relocation of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan) in the prefecture. Okinawa, which seeks changes to the government's plan to build a V-shaped pair of runways at Camp Schwab (in Nago), has been at loggerheads with Tokyo. An agreement was reached yesterday for the two sides to hold talks while making efforts to find common ground.

14) Government to hold consultations on Nov. 7 with Okinawa on relocation of US Futenma Air Station

SANKEI (Page 5) (Full)
November 1, 2007

The government decided yesterday to hold a discussion on Nov. 7 with Okinawan municipalities on its plan to relocate US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station. Consultations on the relocation of the Futenma Air Station to off Camp Schwab (Nago City, Okinawa) have been suspended since January due to the clashes of opinions over a plan to build a V-shaped pair of runways.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura stated yesterday in a Lower House Antiterrorism Special Committee session: "The Futenma relocation plan is important for the realignment of US forces in Japan, as well as for Japan's security. I want to do my best so that the relocation plan will be implemented as early as possible."

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The government aims to break the impasse by letting the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) take the initiative in coordinating views, having Machimura take charge of the relocation issue. However, there is a big gap in views between the GOJ and the local government, which wants the V-shaped pair of runways built offshore as far as possible. It will be difficult to find common ground.

Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda met with Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima yesterday evening for the first time in the Kantei. Fukuda showed his understanding for Nakaima's request that the government should respect the views of local governments. After the meeting, Fukuda told the press: "I want to carry out negotiations in a serious manner in consideration of Okinawa's heavy burden."

15) Nago, Zama off the list for USFJ realignment incentives

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
November 1, 2007

The Defense Ministry yesterday designated 33 municipalities to be subsidized in compensation for their base-hosting burden along with the realignment of US forces in Japan. In May this year, the Diet enacted a law for special measures to implement the US military's realignment. The special measures law provides plans to subsidize base-hosting localities. This is the first time for the Defense Ministry to designate municipalities for its subsidization under the law.

Specifically, the Defense Ministry has designated Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, for the city's agreement to host the USS George Washington, a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. However, the Defense Ministry did not designate Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, for its objection to the planned relocation of Futenma airfield. In its decision this time, the Defense Ministry clearly segregates localities with carrots and sticks according to the degree of their cooperation in the process of realigning the US military presence in Japan.

According to the Defense Ministry, each designated municipality will be notified of subsidies in November. In the current fiscal year, the government will start to subsidize those designated municipalities. The Defense Ministry, according to its Local Cooperation Bureau, will additionally designate other municipalities if they accept realignment plans.

The Defense Ministry-designated municipalities include the city of

Tsugaru in Aomori Prefecture and the city of Chitose in Hokkaido.

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Tsugaru has accepted the installation of advanced early warning

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radar for intercepting intercontinental ballistic missiles. Chitose has accepted the dispersive relocation of F-15 fighters from US military bases to Chitose base for training purposes.

Meanwhile, the Defense Ministry precluded six municipalities that are opposed to relocation plans for US forces. Those deselected municipalities include the city of Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Iwakuni is against the planned relocation of carrier-borne aircraft to Iwakuni Air Station. The US Army plans to locate the 1st Corps' command functions to Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture. Along with this command relocation, Camp Zama will reorganize its headquarters. Sagami-hara City-one of Camp Zama's local hosts-is on the list of

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designated municipalities for its acceptance of the plan. However, another local host, Zama City, is off the list for its objection to the plan.

16) Yen loans to Pakistan to be boosted by 5 billion yen: New contribution intended to help root out terrorism

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
November 1, 2007

Following the expiration of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law expires on Nov. 1, Maritime Self-Defense Force's vessels will pull out of the Indian Ocean on the 2nd. With this in mind, the government yesterday decided to substantially boost economic assistance to Pakistan for this fiscal year. Though assistance to that country has thus far been restricted to oil and water supplies, the government will increase yen loans from 25 billion yen last year to 30 billion yen starting this fiscal year. The increased amount will be used for assistance for the development of the tribal areas located in the border area near Afghanistan.

The area for the envisaged development is called the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), located in northwestern Pakistan. FATA, which stretches along the border near Afghanistan, is a stronghold of the Taliban. The aim of assisting the development of the area is to eliminate the influence of the Taliban.

Japan's credibility in the international community is bound to decline because of its pullout from the maritime interdiction operations in the Indian Ocean. The government has characterized the assistance as a new contribution to the fight against terrorism.

FATA has remained an autonomous area outside the reach of the central government since 1947, when Pakistan was founded. A delay in development has made the area a center for drug smugglers. Taliban remnants that fled from Afghanistan are active there, making fierce terrorist attacks on North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) troops in the border area. The US government has sounded out the possibility of Japan's cooperation for the development of the area, noting that in order to prevent terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, it is essential to develop FATA and make it self-sufficient.

An MSDF supply vessel has assisted operations to prevent moves of terrorists and the transportation of arms and ammunition by supplying fuel and water to vessels of 11 countries. Its operations have been highly appreciated by many countries, including Pakistan. Japan has supplied the second-largest amount of fuel to Pakistani vessels, following the amount supplied to US oilers.

17) Negotiations to continue on joint use of Yokota Air Base:
Japanese, US governments unable to reach agreement by end of month

YOMIURI ONLINE (Tama edition) (Full)
October 31, 2007

The Japanese and US governments, unable to reach an agreement on the joint use of Yokota Air Base by the deadline set for the end of October, have decided to continue negotiations into November.

A passage was included on joint use in the final report on US force realignment in Japan, announced in May last year, that went: "The USG and GOJ will conduct a study of the specific conditions and

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modalities for possible civilian-military dual-use of Yokota Air Base, to be completed within 12 months from commencement."

Based on this agreement, both governments established a study group on joint military-civilian use of Yokota Air Base consisting of responsible foreign and defense affairs officials. The study commenced last year in October. The aim was to complete the study by the end of this October, and until now, the group has met a total of eight times.

A source in Foreign Ministry's Status of Forces Agreement Office said, "The study effort on such matters as the specific conditions is still not ended." Recognizing that agreement could not be reached by the end of October, the official added, "We would like to conclude the study as early as possible."

Both governments have decided to make a judgment in the end on whether joint use is feasible or not based on the results of the study group's report.

18) LDP, DPJ moving closer; Shift from confrontation to coordination evident after party-head session

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
November 1, 2007

The first party-head meeting between Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa continued to rock the ruling and opposition blocs yesterday. Ozawa's meeting with Fukuda drew fire from all opposition parties but the DPJ, sparking a sense of alarm against a possible grand coalition by the LDP and DPJ. At the same time, the two parties reached an agreement on new Diet personnel appointments rules and decided to hold prior consultations on Political Funds Control Law revision and begin talks on the integration of the ruling coalition's and the DPJ's plans for revising the Natural Disaster Victims Relief Law. The Diet has now begun moving away from confrontation to coordination.

Given the schedule for Fukuda and Ozawa to meet again on Nov. 2, the DPJ has confirmed the policy course to postpone producing a counterproposal to the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law until after their meeting. A senior DPJ lawmaker explained: "In the upcoming party-head session, there is a possibility that the LDP will support the DPJ's civilian-assistance-oriented plan. We should not demonstrate an adversarial stand by presenting a counterproposal at this point."

Meanwhile, Japanese Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii in a press conference yesterday criticized Ozawa, saying: "It is like the LDP and DPJ are hijacking the Diet. Mr. Ozawa is repeating closed-door sessions against his own words that he would discuss matters openly before the public. There is no way to explain his behavior."

Social Democratic Party head Mizuho Fukushima, too, complained in a press conference: "Even former Prime Minister Koizumi held talks with all opposition party heads. An attempt to decide on matters by just two party heads by suspending the Diet is unheard of. I cannot understand at all the significance of the largest opposition party acceding to a request and its advantage. I am against a thing like a grand coalition."

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A variety of reactions also came from within the ruling parties.

There have been voices of concern in the New Komeito about the LDP and DPJ moving closer to each other. Despite that, Secretary General Kazuo Kitagawa in a press meeting yesterday underlined the party's "cool-headedness," saying: "The political situation is clearly such that opposition party policy has to be reflected in decision-making at times. (The prime minister and LDP executives) have informed us of (the party-head talks) in advance. There is no concern."

19) DPJ's Diet Affairs Committee Chair Yamaoka says in meeting with LDP counterpart: "We are barbarian tribes of Ainu origin"

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
November 1, 2007

So Watanabe

At the beginning of a session of Diet affairs policy chiefs between the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), DPJ Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka said: "(Of the four attendees), you two are peers. We are barbarian tribes of Ainu origin." Yamaoka retracted these remarks at a press briefing held immediately after the meeting, but his gaffe is likely to create a stir, as the DPJ supported Kaori Tahara, an Ainu who ran as an independent in the Hokkaido constituency in this summer's Upper House election.

Meeting the press, Yamaoka said, "I take back any expression leading to discrimination. If I caused any misunderstanding, I feel sorry for that," and retracted his controversial remarks. He added: "I used that expression to mean sturdiness and that I represent working people. I don't agree with those who think the use of that expression in itself is discrimination. I don't look down on people of Ainu origin. I mentioned it, but I did so because I respect the Ainu."

Susumu Emori, professor (of Japanese history) at Tohoku Gakuin University and an expert on the Ainu problem, said:

"Assuming that the Ainu are barbarians, he apparently made those remarks. He may be unaware of that, but that is a problem. I question his qualifications as a responsible legislator."

20) ROK foreign minister says, "Regret means regret," in response to ROK ambassador's remarks on "abduction of Kim Dae Jung"

ASAHI (Page 7) (Abridged)
November 1, 2007

Tadahisa Takatsuki, Seoul

South Korean Ambassador to Japan Yu Myung Hwan on Oct. 30 conveyed "regret" to Foreign Minister Koumura regarding the 1973 abduction of Kim Dae Jung. In this regard, South Korea Foreign Affairs & Trade Minister Song Min Soon yesterday noted, "Regret means regret," and steered clear of mentioning that the word "regret" means "apology" by the South Korean government. Japan has taken the ambassador's mention of "regret" as meaning an "apology." According to several informed sources, South Korea, which, out of consideration for public opinion, wanted not to give a strong impression that it offered an apology to Japan, and Japan, which thought it was

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necessary for South Korea to declare an apology in some form, tried to settle the abduction case by interpreting "regret" in ways to meet their respective convenience.

Song was replying to a question by a South Korean reporter asking, "Did the ambassador's remark mean regret or apology?"

According to an informed source, soon after a report acknowledging the then intelligence agency's involvement in the abduction of Kim was released on Oct. 24, the South Korean government decided to

express "regret" to Japan and conveyed this decision to Japan. Out of consideration for public backlash, South Korea found it necessary to avoid using direct words expressing apology to Japan with one South Korean government official noting, "Regret also means apology." Japan therefore decided to take "regret" as an apology. Both sides thus reached tacit consent.

In a meeting with South Korean Ambassador Yu on Oct. 30, Foreign Minister Koumura said "I take regret as 'apology.'" Speaking of the description mentioning "Japan's responsibility," Koumura asked the ambassador to make sure that "that is not the view of the South Korean government." Ambassador Yu said, "In my view, I think it is not." Thus both sides settled the abduction case.

SCHIEFFER